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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 HO CHI MINH CITY 000891

SIPDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - REMOVING PASS LINE

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR FOR CA/OCS/ACS/EAP; EAP/EX; EAP/BCLTV;
STATE FOR OES/STC (M.GOLDBERG); OES/IHA (D.SINGER AND
N.COMELLA)
BANGKOK FOR RMO, CDC, USAID/RDM/A (MFRIEDMAN)
STATE PASS HHS/OGHA (WSTEIGER, EELVANDER, ABHAT)
USDA FOR FAS/PASS TO APHIS
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FOR OSD/ISA/AP FOR LEW STERN
USAID FOR ANE AND GH (DCAROLL, SCLEMENTS AND PCHAPLIN)
DEPT PASS TO AID

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAGR](#) [ECON](#) [AMED](#) [TBIO](#) [CASC](#) [PGOV](#) [SENV](#) [SOCI](#) [VM](#) [AFLU](#)
SUBJECT: AVIAN FLU: POULTRY VACCINATION BEGINS IN TIEN GIANG
PROVINCE

REF: HCMC 0855

[¶1.](#) (SBU) Summary: A ConGen visit to southern Tien Giang Province provided insights into the way in which Vietnam is handling poultry vaccinations as a means of halting the spread of avian influenza. Tien Giang is one of two provinces nation-wide that will serve as a starting point for the GVN's poultry inoculation program. The Department of Animal Health (DAH) in Tien Giang appears to have mobilized all available provincial resources in order to disseminate information about the vaccination drive, obtain current figures about the poultry population in the province and administer the vaccine in a speedy and thorough manner. Questions may still remain, however, about the vaccine's effectiveness. End Summary.

[¶2.](#) (SBU) EconOff traveled to Tien Giang Province to discuss the vaccination program with local officials and to observe vaccinations. According to Mrs. Nguyen Viet Nga, Director of the Animal Health Bureau, Tien Giang was one of the hardest hit provinces during the AI outbreak of 2003-04, and by a directive of the Prime Minister was one of two provinces chosen to be the first to begin inoculating poultry. Tien Giang's DAH estimated there are 350,000 households in the province, 250,000 of which raise chickens. Tien Giang has a poultry population of approximately 3 million, of which 65% are backyard variety or non-commercial.

[¶3.](#) (SBU) In mid-July, before commencing vaccinations, the provincial People's Committee and the DAH introduced the program to officials at the provincial and district levels. Next, information about the program was disseminated to the general public through local TV and radio, and written information was disbursed with the help of the Youth Union, Women's Union and Farmer's Union. Local authorities estimated that some 800 people -- or five to seven per commune -- worked on the information campaign.

[¶4.](#) (SBU) Tien Giang DAH instructed district and commune People's Committees to conduct a survey of the poultry population using a form prepared by the Animal Health Bureau of Tien Giang. Afterwards, a schedule was disseminated, outlining days when specific households would be visited. Residents were responsible for having their poultry penned on the day of the inoculation team's visit. One to three people make up each team. Team members wear masks and protective gloves and carry two bottles of vaccine made in China, H5N2 vaccine for chickens and H5N1 vaccine for ducks. The owner is given gloves and a mask and assists the team in rounding up the poultry and holding the birds as the vaccine is injected in their necks. Each inoculator, during the process of visiting approximately 15 households, uses on average four gloves and four masks a day. Gloves and masks are collected at the end of the day and disposed of in landfill or incinerated. The teams give poultry owners a document verifying the number and type of poultry vaccinated, as well as follow-up information regarding the health of the birds. In the future if there is to be any culling of poultry, farmers will have to present these documents verifying their compliance with the vaccine program, in order to receive government compensation. The team keeps a record of where it has been, as well as data on the number and type of vaccines administered. Approximately

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1,200 people, including 50 DAH staff members, 129 veterinarians and contract employees are involved in implementing the vaccination program.

[¶5.](#) (SBU) Tien Giang launched the vaccination program on

July 30 in three communes and plans to complete the first round of vaccine shots in all 167 communes by the end of August. As of August 11, 609,140 birds had been inoculated: 426,522 chickens and 182,618 ducks. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) determined that only chickens that were already over 70 days old and those that farmers intended to raise for more than 70 days were to be inoculated, unless the farmer intended to sell the bird during the month of August. After a bird is inoculated, the farmer is not permitted to sell the bird for another 28 days. Tien Giang's DAH reported that at the end of the campaign -- estimated to wrap up by the end of September -- it will have inoculated 75-90% of the birds targeted. According to the MARD, the next provinces in southern Vietnam scheduled to begin the vaccination program in September will be Ho Chi Minh City, Long An and Ben Tre.

¶16. (SBU) Comment: The MARD's poultry inoculation campaign has begun in Tien Giang Province as scheduled and for the most part appears to be proceeding as planned. Authorities in Tien Giang seem to be going to significant lengths to ensure that people are well informed of the vaccination program, that there is a reliable accounting of the poultry population and that the program is implemented in a quick and efficient manner. If the bird inoculation effort is carried out successfully, benefits of the program will include slowing the spread of AI, raising awareness of farmers about AI, building trust between farmers and the authorities, and providing lessons for future government action on avian influenza. The program is only as effective as its vaccine, however, and according to Intervet, a competitor, there is little or no data available about the effectiveness of the Chinese vaccine being used (reftel).
End Comment.

WINNICK